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Gallery and Studio

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.



HAVING given in an early number of *The Art Amateur* a full and interesting account of the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe collection from the pen of the late Edward Strahan (afterward reprinted in "The Art Treasures of America"), and having also noticed it at the time of its presentation to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it will not be necessary for us to give a detailed account of it now in connection with the re-opening of the museum. Still it is by far the most important addition made to the possessions of the museum in some years, and it is only proper that attention should be called to the manner of its disposition there. As is well known, it is not a harmonious collection. It contains many good pictures of various schools, so various that they can hardly be brought together in one room without seriously interfering with one another. Then many of them are large figure paintings, which require space and plenty of it—more, indeed, than the museum will have at its disposal until the addition now building is completed. Some of these pictures again are not only large but showy, and seriously injure the effect of more modest and more meritorious paintings placed near them. Thus the beautiful little "Holy Family," by Knaus, which we illustrate, is quite lost among the more boldly colored pictures by Boldini, Stevens, and Schreyer near it. Even Gérôme's "Prayer in a Mosque, Old Cairo," one of the best Gérômes in the country, loses something by its juxtaposition with the works just referred to. Then the chalky color and too evidently studied composition of Kaulbach's "Crusaders" make a very disagreeable impression, for which one is utterly unprepared, coming fresh from the rich tones and spirited drawing of painters like Decamps, Vollon, and Lefebvre. But this matter will doubtless be remedied, without breaking up the collection, when the museum has sufficient space at its disposal. In the mean time, while the public is to be congratulated on the many admirable paintings which the gift of the collection has added to the treasures of the museum, a little direction is needed to enable it to enjoy the best of the paintings understandingly. There are two small but very good Meissoniers. The earlier of these (A.D. 1856), "The Brothers Van de Velde," from the famous Laurent-Richard collection, is one of the gems of the gallery; and the other (dated 1869), from the collection of the late Baron Strausberger, Berlin, representing two mounted officers, with the horses admirably foreshortened, with the seashore for a background, is hardly inferior to it. "The Startled Confessor" and "The Reprimand," by Vibert, are full of expression, and are much better in color than most of that rather vulgar

painter's recent work. Henner's "Bather" is in his usual key of pale luminous flesh, dark brown and green foliage, and turquoise-colored sky reflected in a pool of water; but it is a particularly fine bit of flesh painting, even for Henner. The gray slate and red-tiled roofs in Vollon's "Farmyard" are a little discordant, but there is much good work in the picture. Dupré's "The Hay Wagon," from the W. T. Blodgett collection, shows plainly the strong influence the Dutch landscape school had upon the painter. The Decamps—"The Night Patrol, Cairo"—which is placed near it was bought at the sale of the John Taylor Johnson collection. It is a small but superb example, having all the dash and all

large clump of trees on one side, and the farther bank with a smaller clump of trees on the other, the cloud forms being relied upon to restore the "balance." Blaize Desgoffe's "Objects of Art" shows much careful, learned, but hardly interesting still-life painting. Daubigny's "On the Seine, Morning," is quietly and coolly poetical. The way in which the rising sun is introduced is refreshingly natural, and may furnish a needed lesson in simplicity to some of our ambitious young landscape painters.

Jules Breton's "Religious Procession in Brittany," crowded yet monotonous in composition, has darkened considerably, so that the effect of the sea of white caps in the background has almost gone. Cabanel's leering "Shulamite Woman," painted to order for Miss Wolfe, is an example of the sort of factory work which even artists of high reputation sometimes turn out. There is an affectation of archæological knowledge in the Egyptian colonnade in the background, but the costume, the attitude, the soft flesh and white skin of this Parisian odalisque are all as far as possible from anything that can be imagined of the heroine of the *Canticle*. Troyon's "Study of a White Cow" has become too blue in the shadows, but it is capably drawn. Corot's "Ville d'Avray" is not successful in the difficult effect attempted, that of scattered dark leaves against a pale gray sky. Hans Makart's "Dream after the Ball," painted to order, is a poor specimen of the work even of that over-rated artist.

About a score of notably good water-colors, arranged on screens, make part of the collection. Among the more interesting are Meissonier's "The Sign Painter;" Fortuny's "Camels Reposing," and Maurice Leloir's "The Drink of Milk." Bida's "Massacre of the Mamalukes," Doré's "Retreat from Moscow," and an early Detaille will also repay inspection.

The museum has also received the gift of an important painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which is now on exhibition in the outer gallery. It contains the portraits of three gentlemen whose position as trustees of the tenth Earl of Westmoreland gained for them the privilege of having their figures transmitted to posterity by Sir Joshua's brush. One of them, Mr. Inigo Jones, is seated at a small round table, his hand clasping a bottle. A Mr. Blair is also seated, with a wine-glass between his fingers. His white satin coat and sea-green waist-

coat make him the principal figure in the composition, though the third gentleman, Mr. Fane, represented standing against a background of sky, is important enough to prevent the composition from being stagey. The two first mentioned have for background the leaves and trellis of an arbor. The tone of color is low, harmonious, and refined. The flesh tints, though a trifle pale, possibly due to fading of the carnations employed or to injudicious cleaning, are still exquisite, and the brush work is masterly. The museum is indebted for this fine picture to the generosity of Mr. J. S. Morgan, the banker.



"THE HOLY FAMILY." BY LUDWIG KNAUS.

(IN THE CATHARINE WOLFE COLLECTION IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.)

the beauty of coloring for which the painter is famous. Bonnat's "Fellah Woman and Child" has serious merits, in spite of a background which has the serious fault of looking like a wall when it is meant for a sky. Rosa Bonheur's "Weaning the Calves" is rather disagreeable in tone, and lacks some of the solidity in modelling which makes "The Horse Fair" so remarkable. Lefebvre's "Graziella," who does not in the least look like Lamartine's *Graziella*, is a fine study of form and expression. A small Rousseau, "River Landscape," shows his customary composition of a near river bank and